6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

to Las Trinqueras he would buy him red cloth, flowered dresses for his womenfolk, and that supreme Indian luxury, powder and shot for the gun, and so on.

Pancho listened with a smile, every now and then giving a little scornful laugh, which might have meant rich contentment or just plain scepticism. He winked at us—mere neutral observers—with his horribly burnt eye.

Two days later a crew was ready. Pancho himself was not going, but our three travellers were to leave in two big canoes. In twenty days they would reach Las Trinqueras and from that point the rubber planters' launch would take them on to Ciudad Bolivar. We gave them a letter for the pilots of the air charter company with whom we had an agreement. They had failed us badly. We had made it clear to the plane when it had paid us its last visit, by putting a big notice on the strip, that we had one passenger to be taken off. Jean couldn't face the thought of the journey back by water. But they had not come for her, so she stayed with us. We told them that we would be expecting a plane on the Kirisochi field on either the fourteenth, fifteenth, or sixteenth of April.

After the three had gone, a vast silence seemed to settle on the forest, touching us as well. It was sad to have said good-bye to friends like Momi and Giovanni, but by way of compensation we now had a much better balanced party. I felt free, gloriously free. The field was mine now. I could push ahead with our work to the limit, with no ethical question marks bothering me, and no remorse.

We went off with the Shirians to pay a visit to Pulipuli and to look up a valuable fellow named Cesare. The Valley of the Moon can also be entered by way of the Canaracuni, along another valley which runs down from the same heights and is linked with the Canaracuni by a maze of paths. On every side there are Shirian huts, tiny dilapidated affairs, each in a little clearing threatened by the advance of the forest.

Cesare was not at home. In his stead we found a crowd of old acquaintances, one of them being an old Indian of great dignity whom we had nicknamed 'The Senator'. He had come to Kirisochi on our arrival there, he had been present while we were building our hut, and never had he done a hand's turn. He would watch others at work with a fine air of detachment which was really remarkable. He was truly sufficient unto himself. Most of the time he spent stretched out in a hammock—a very small one made of liana—with his feet higher than his head. Periodically he scratched his back with a stick prepared and reserved for just that purpose. One of those ivory back-scratchers with a